

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 AF-10

EUR-25 IO-13 ACDA-19 AID-20 IGA-02 EB-11 SCEM-02

TRSE-00 OMB-01 INT-08 RSR-01 /193 W

----- 039913

R 241305Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4459

INFO USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSUL DQAHHRAN

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

S E C R E T JIDDA 3105

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

KUWAIT PASS DOHAR AND MUSCAT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SA

SUBJ: PRINCE SULTAN SPEAKS FURTHER ON SAG ROLE IN GULF

REF: A. JIDDA 2981; B. DHAHRAN 0577 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR ASKED SULTAN WHAT FURTHER STEPS HE  
MIGHT BE CONSIDERING BY WAY IMPLEMENTATION POLICY  
CONTAINED SPEECH REPORTED REFTEL A. SULTAN STATED HE  
ANXIOUS OPEN DOORS TO GREATER GULF REGIONAL COOPERATION.  
AS EXAMPLES OF SAUDI ACTIONS HE CITED RECENTLY SIGNED  
COMMERCIAL AND CUSTOMS AGREEMENT WITH QATAR, UNDERSTAND-  
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ING REACHED BY WHICH CAUSEWAY TO BAHHRAN WOULD BE

CONSTRUCTED, FORMATION OF VERY SECRET MILITARY COORDINATION COMMITTEE INCLUDING BAHRAIN, QATAR AND SAUDI ARABIA. WHEN ASKED IF SUCH GROUP MIGHT BE EXPANDED SULTAN REPLIED KUWAIT'S SPECIAL PROBLEM WITH IRAQ POSED OBSTACLE BUT WHEN BORDER ISSUE SETTLED WITH ABU DHABI, THEN UAE MIGHT BE DRAWN IN ALSO. SULTAN EMPHASIZED HE LOOKED TO COOPERATION WITH IRAN IN GULF. HE ALSO TOOK OPPORTUNITY REAFFIRM STRENGTH OF SAUDI-US TIES, APPRAISAL WITH WHICH AMB WARMLY ASSETED. WE REGARD SULTAN'S INTEREST AND LEADERSHIP IN GULF AFFAIRS AS FAVORABLE SIGN. END SUMMARY.

1. WHEN DCM AND I SAW SULTAN JULY 21 I REMARKED THAT WE HAD READ WITH INTEREST HIS GULF SPEECH AND WISHED COMPLIMENT HIM ON VIGOROUS AFFIRMATION OF POSITIVE SAUDI OUTLOOK TOWARD GULF PROBLEMS. I WONDERED IF HRH COULD TELL US IF HE HAD IN MIND SOME STEPS FOR FOLLOWING UP HIS REMARKS WITH FURTHER ACTION.

2. SULTAN SAID WE COULD TAKE HIS STATEMENT AT DHAHRAN GRADUATION EXERCISE AS REFLECTING FURTHER ASPECTS OF SAUDI POLICY OUTLINED IN PAPER HE HAD PRESENTED TO PRESIDENT NIXON ON BEHALF OF KING FAISAL AT TIME OF SULTAN'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON SLIGHTLY OVER A YEAR AGO. HE HAD THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT ADDRESS FORMULATION OF SAUDI POLICY TO ALL GULF PEOPLES, SENIOR REPRESENTATIVES OF WHOM WERE PRESENT IN HIS AUDIENCE. HE WAS ANXIOUS OPEN DOORS TO GREATER COOPERATION IN AREA. SULTAN SAID HE THOUGHT HIS TALK HAD GENERALLY BENEFICIAL IMPACT IN AREA AND WONDERED IF I HAD SAME IMPRESSION. RESPONDED I HAD SEEN NO EXTENSIVE COMMENT SO FAR BUT BELIEVED HRH QUITE LIKELY CORRECT.

3. AS TO FURTHER STEPS, SULTAN POINTED OUT COMMERCIAL AND CUSTOMS AGREEMENT HAD JUST BEEN SIGNED WITH QATAR. BY WAY OF ESPECIALLY FAVORABLE GESTURE (TO WHICH SULTAN APPARENTLY ATTACHED SOME IMPORTANCE) SAUDIS HAD FLOWN QATARI MINISTER WHO PRESENT AT DHAHRAN EXERCISES, BACK TO DOHAR VIA SAUDI EXECUTIVE JETSTAR AIRCRAFT.

4. AS FURTHER EVIDENCE SAUDI ACTIVISM TOWARD STRENGTHENING GULF TIES SULTAN CITED ECONOMIC UNDERSTANDING REACHED WITH  
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BAHRAIN WHICH INCLUDED FIRM AGREEMENT TO BUILD "BRIDGE" (WE ASSUME SULTAN MEANT CAUSEWAY) ACROSS CHANNEL SEPARATING BAHRAIN AND SAUDI ARABIA. SULTAN STATED THERE ARE COMPETITIVE EFFORTS TO BUILD OPEC DRYDOCK ELSEWHERE IN GULF AREA; SAUDI ARABIA, HOWEVER STRONGLY SUPPORTING ITS CONSTRUCTION IN BAHRAIN. TO SWEETEN MATTERS FURTHER SAG PROMISING 20 MILLION RIYALS ASSIST IN HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN BAHRAIN.

5. SULTAN INFORMED ME "MOST CONFIDENTIALLY" THAT BAHRAIN, QATAR AND SAUDI ARABIA WILL SET UP A SECRET COMMITTEE FOR PURPOSE OF ONGOING COORDINATION WITH REGARD MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING SO THAT, SULTAN REMARKED SOMEWHAT VAGUELY, "MILITARY DEVELOPMENT OF EACH IS PROPERLY BALANCED."

6. I ASKED IF IT POSSIBLE CONCEIVE SUCH COORDINATING GROUP BEING ENLARGED TO INCLUDE OTHERS. SULTAN RESPONDED KUWAITI MEMBERSHIP WOULD BE LOGICAL AND WELCOME BUT SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF KUWAITI PROBLEMS WITH IRAQ MILITATE AGAINST KUWAITI ROLE AT PRESENT. WHEN BORDER ISSUE WAS SETTLED, THEN SAUDI ARABIA WOULD BE HAPPY SEE UAE DRAWN IN ALSO. LATELY, OF COURSE, SAUDI ARABIA HAS BEEN WORKING CLOSELY IN DEFENSE MATTERS WITH OMAN AND COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THAT STATE IS THUS ALREADY WELL UNDERWAY.

7. ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS, SULTAN REMARKED, SHOULD BE SEEN, OF COURSE, AGAINST BACKGROUND OF CONTINUED STRONG SAUDI-US TIES AND SAUDI HOPE FOR CONTINUED US ASSISTANCE IN STRENGTHENING ITS DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT. I REPLIED THAT THIS WAS PRECISELY USG OBJECTIVE AND THAT WE INTENDED CONTINUE RESPOND WHEREVER WE COULD TO HELP STRENGTHEN SAUDI DEFENSES. (FURTHER TO SULTAN'S REMARKS REPORTED REFTEL A, WE HAVE COMMENT FROM CONGEN DHAHRAN THAT ARABIC SPEAKING MEMBER OF AUDIENCE NOTED VIRTUALLY EXPLICIT INVITATION BY PRINCE TO REPS OF GULF STATES PRESENT TO HAVE THEIR ARMED FORCES PARTICIPATE IN ONGOING SAUDI MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAMS.)

8. SULTAN ADDED THAT HE SAW SAUDI ROLE IN GULF AS ONE OF COOPERATION WITH IRAN. HE WANTED AMB TO UNDERSTAND THAT IN HIS OPINION ARAB TROUBLES WITH IRANIAN POLICY IN GULF HAD COME ABOUT BECAUSE OF ARAB MISJUDGMENT AND INTERMPERATE ZEAL. THIS POINT, SULTAN SAID, HAD BEEN MADE AS WELL TO CORRESPONDENTS FROM LEBANESE AL-SAYYED IN INTERVIEW WEEK BEFORE.

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9. COMMENT: SULTAN'S REMARKS REFLECT HEALTHY PREOCCUPATION WITH NEED FOR MORE ACTIVE SAUDI ROLE IN DEVELOPING GULF TIES AND COOPERATION. SOMEWHAT BELATEDLY SAUDIS WAKING UP TO FACT OTHERS (KUWAIT, IRAN) WILL SOON HAVE ESTABLISHED PRINCIPAL CLAIMS TO LEADERSHIP IF SAG DOES NOT GET BUSY EXERCISE SOME IMAGINATION AND INITIATIVE. WITH SULTAN IN CHARGE, SUCH NEW ENDEAVOR MORE LIKELY BRING RESULTS THAN IN ANY OTHER HANDS. SERIOUS OBSTACLES SUCH AS CONTINUED EXISTENCE BOUNDARY PROBLEM WITH UAE AND DIFFERING SAUDI AND IRANIAN VIEWPOINTS ON LITTLE ISLANDS REMAINS TO BE SOLVED. WE CAN ONLY HOPE STEAM BEING GENERATED BY SULTAN MAY DEVELOP MOMENTUM HELP DEAL WITH THOSE HITHERTO INTRACTABLE MATTERS.

THACHER

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